

Channels for Dissent

John F. Blake
Deputy Director for Administration
[REDACTED]

DD/A Registry

File *Personnel-11*

DDA 78-2413/4 *(July file)*

15 August 1978

25X1A

Executive Secretary, EAG
[REDACTED]

J1m:

I am in receipt of the DCI/MAG memorandum of 1 August, subject "Management-Employee Communications." DDCI has asked that EAG Members comment on this paper.

I would choose to reserve comment until the matter is scheduled for EAG discussion.

/s/ Jack

John F. Blake

Att:

Ref memo

Distribution:

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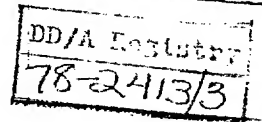
DDA:JFBlake:kmg (15 Aug 78)

Att: Memo dtd 1 Aug 78 to DDCI
fr DCI/MAG, subj: Management-
Employee Communications (DDA 78-
2413/3)

1 August 1978

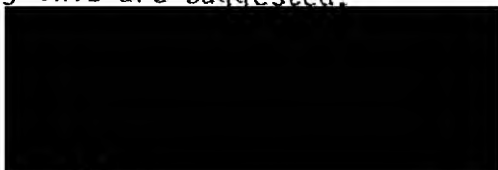
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : DCI/Management Advisory Group
SUBJECT : Management-Employee Communications



During our work on morale and risk taking in the Agency and our examination of certain personnel issues, we have found continued concern about the state of communication between management and employees, this despite the effective action already taken by the DCI to improve communications.

The attached memorandum recommends two additional steps to help improve communications between management and employees at the directorate and office/division levels. First, it is recommended that you approve the institution of an in-house guest speaker and discussion program to be organized and run by the DCI/MAG. Second, that you encourage office/division chiefs to explore ways to achieve more direct communication with their employees. Two procedures for doing this are suggested.


Chairman, DCI/MAG

Attachment
As stated

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EAG 30/a

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MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

Problems of communication are endemic in large organizations, and there is virtually always room for improvement. Communication to and from management is especially important during periods of organizational change and adjustment, as at present. We recognize and applaud the Director's continuing efforts to improve communication at the DCI level. This memorandum recommends specific steps to improve communication at the directorate and office/division levels.

Before discussing specific recommendations, it may be useful to define the problem more precisely. We do not believe that management is unaware of employee concerns. The principal problem is that many employees are unaware of the extent to which management is informed. When employees perceive a major problem of communication to management, this perception is often based on the facile assumption that management couldn't possibly be well informed, because if it were informed of the situation (as the employee sees it) management would take the proper corrective action. Moreover, even when an employee does have a formal opportunity to make a case to management, the result may be to simply increase frustration. "You ask for my advice, but then you don't listen to me." In sum, employees do not perceive much concrete evidence that management is concerned with their problems, and they don't understand the constraints operating on management that prevent action.

The following recommendations are aimed at generating increased communication from management and at creating opportunities for a real give-and-take interaction between management and employees:

a. MAG should organize and run an in-house guest speaker and roundtable discussion program in the auditorium. The principal focus here would be on speakers from those components that provide services for the Agency as a whole. For example, the Director of Personnel has in the past referred to his interest in dispelling misperceptions about the personnel system; he could be invited to speak in the auditorium on "Thirteen Myths About Personnel." The Director of the Office of Logistics could be asked to describe efforts made to solve the space problem and improve the heating/air-conditioning system. The Office of General Counsel could respond to employee concern about more effective prosecution for unauthorized disclosure of classified information. This program would take either of two forms, focusing in each case upon a specific topic:

-- A lecture presentation, followed by questions from the audience. This format would be used when the principal objective is simply to impart information.

-- A question-answer discussion format with a panel of selected employees and a senior official. MAG would screen and select the employees to ensure a good cross-section and would moderate the discussion to make certain it does not develop into a personal gripe session. The purpose of this format is to give interested employees an opportunity to get below the surface of complex issues by posing a series of follow-up questions. The Panel discussion would be followed by questions from the audience.

b. You or the DCI should encourage Deputy Directors and especially their Office Directors (in NFAC, DDA, and DDS&T) or Division Chiefs (in DDO) to explore ways to achieve more direct communication with their employees. Too much information is lost or distorted when passed through a series of staff meetings, and senior managers should be asked to examine and experiment with appropriate ways to overcome this problem.

c. No mechanistic procedure can guarantee appropriate communication. The degree to which communication thrives depends primarily upon the attitude of management toward maintaining open channels of communication with employees. But given an appropriate attitude on the part of management, there are some procedures that have proven helpful. For example, some offices and at least one directorate hold large meetings in the auditorium for a "state of the office" briefing roughly once a year. These meetings have generally been very well received, and all components that are large enough to have communications problems and small enough to fit into the auditorium or some other meeting area should be encouraged to follow some comparable procedure.

d. Another way of opening up more direct lines of communication with employees is for office/division chiefs to designate occasional open office hours when an office/division employee is encouraged to come in to see the chief. We do not know to what extent such an opportunity would in fact be used, but it would seem useful to experiment with this procedure in several large components.

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Remarks: The DDCI has asked that the attached be circulated to EAG members for comment in connection with the "Channels for Dissent" paper.					
FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER					
FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.					DATE
James H. Taylor, Executive Secretary					AUG 10 1981 00142R000500040012-3
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